

## Abraham Lincoln papers

From Horace B. Allis to Abraham Lincoln<sup>1</sup>, October 7, 1864

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<sup>1</sup> As Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives, Allis had refused to certify William M. Fishback's election to the U. S. Senate in May 1864. A majority in the legislature retaliated by removing Allis and appointing a new speaker who certified Fishback's election. Upon his removal, Allis went to Washington and lobbied against the seating of Fishback. After much debate, the Senate determined not to seat Fishback. See William C. Harris, *With Charity For All: Lincoln and the Restoration of the Union* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 206.

Bloomington Illinois

Oct 7 1864

Dear Sir

I wrote you a few days since, about matters in the State of Arks. I deem it my duty to you and the loyal people of the State and of the Union, to give you my views and the views of my friends upon the political "Status" of the State. I will premise by saying I was a member of the convention which framed the constitution in 1864. That I warmly advocated the reorganization of the State Govmt as proposed by the President, believing that such a course would aid the Gov,mt of the U. S. in putting down the Rebellion and restoring quiet to our State

Actual experience has changed my opinion to some extent, instead of allaying the discord it has increased it, instead of aid to the Fed,l Army and the authorities, it has produced, discord, vituperation and abuse of those who were doing duty among us, worthy of confidence and instead of loyal men, men who have never been guilty of aiding the rebellion in any way, being chosen to conduct the State affairs, in many instances those who have directly aided and abetted the rebellion have succeeded in being placed in positions, under the State Gov,mt, and many have been recommended to Your Excellency for appointments, who to say the least are not satisfactory to those who have never forfeited one single right, by any act, of theirs. One other thing is transpiring under its auspices that is claims for spoiliations by rebels are being proposed, (and some have been presented) by those who were secessionists, while the truly loyal have not to my knowledge presented any claims, more especially for the loss of Negroes.

I had hoped the State Govm,t would be an auxilliary and aid to the military. None of my hopes have been realized but all my fears— I now believe Mr President that a Military Government is all that will be practicable until the army can with safety be withdrawn from the State. Designing men to succeed will & have employed the Bushwhacker to aid them in carrying Elections, and in rendering the Elective franchise a curse, instead of the Blessing it is designed to be. When the organizing of our state was going on all was hopeful — Even up to the session of the Legislature, when the defeat of Gen,l Banks<sup>2</sup> upon Red River let loose all the twits of Texas upon our state All was hopeful. But when Gen,l Steele<sup>3</sup> returned from Camden the Jubilant Countenances, of members of that legislature, and of those who sympathized with the rebellion soon convinced me, that all that pretended to be Union men were not sincere. that they were only Union because “its star was in the ascendant” not from love of the flag, but for the loaves of office which they were striving to obtain— Such being the state of affairs, and that it will continue such until the arms of the Union can hold the whole State I see no alternative but a Military Govornor, and its attendant, or a far worse abortive attempt to Elect officers of state under the Constitution, the Result of which will insure the Election of many, who were the principal leading men in bringing about this rebellion and under whose control no good Union Man can live, and enjoy life or liberty. Of what avail Mr. President are all the sufferings of the Union men & families of our state if after all our toils our sufferings, the same men who advocated secession aided the cause must be placed in control again,? The Amnesty oath prescribed by Your Excellency meets my hearty approval, but that it is taken advantage of for base purposes is true. And I can see no way by which the Loyal men of our state can be protected and Rebels punished, (I mean those rebels who now say and prove it so, that they are better union men than you Mr President,) but by the appointment of a Military Govornor for the State— I am fully aware Mr President I am advocating an doctrine that will meet with determind opposition and abuse. Also that it differs from your good wishes, and from mine— I am satisfied and so are my friends that you Mr. President have done all in your power to aid the Loyal men of our state — without adopting any ultra views. Many who now abuse the Amnesty proclamation are indebted to it for all the rights they have, yet they have become so intensely loyal, that they would withhold it, from far better men than they are or ever were— They are even unwilling that any one shall now come in and take the oath — and some of them no doubt from fear of exposuere by some such men who knew them — when they were for Secession

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<sup>2</sup> Nathaniel P. Banks

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Steele



Now Mr President permit me to return you the thanks of all loyal men of Ark,s for the kindness and courtesy extended to us by you officially and personally. And we are willing to acord to you Sir the honesty of intention and purpose to which you are entitled— And our only wonder is that so few if any errors have been committed by you, in Ark,s affairs

With you we aided the reorganization of the state and believed and hoped it would be best and we regretted that Congress differed with you — that they had not given us such a reception as we are entitled to— But under present aspect of affairs I do not believe a Quorum of the Legislature will be present — and that no good will come of it— And that Congress had opened the way for such a course — from other motives perhaps— And I hope Your Excellency will now accept the suggestion and at the proper time make the appointment—

I am very Respectfully yours &c H. B. Allis Speaker of House

Arkansas